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THE FUTURE AMERICAN.

WHAT is to be the outcome of the amalgamation of the numerous languages, races, colors, customs, and conditions of life in America?

Are the English-speaking people drifting toward a universal language and race of the future?

Is a new type of man in process of development, of a higher or lower degree?

The present manifestations of the influence of foreign tongues upon the English language in America covers too wide a field to be answered in entirety. In one article, the data on the subject can only be considered briefly and in sections. In the southwestern portion of America the Aztec and Spanish tongues have stamped themselves upon our language. There we are confronted with a vocabulary of words and phrases of which we have little or no comprehension. In the Western mining regions are numerous terms which have become a part of our dictionary, and which emanated from various foreign sources, and were grafted into our language. In Louisiana we find a Creole population from whom the whites borrowed; a dissemination also of Acadian words which add to the confusion. There we find negroes who speak the Creole language, or the Acadian, or their own exclusively, or all of them indifferently, or mix one or more so as to be quite misunderstood by the Northerner. We find that Creoles, whites, blacks, Frenchmen, and Spaniards have intermarried somewhat, and interbred more with the descendants of these in the form of quadroons, mulattoes, etc. Many of these have no definite tongue of their own, and it would require the most skilled linguist to trace their vocabulary to its many sources. In that section one finds many people who cannot speak English at all, although possessed of the soil for over a century; again others

who speak a garbled or mongrel English ; and still others who converse in several languages but cannot claim any one as their own. Further north, in such States as Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina, etc., we find the negro and white dialects thoroughly amalgamated. In New York State, the Dutch tongue has left its wreckage all along the Mohawk Valley and among the Catskill Mountains. In the Western States, there are large areas where only German, or Scandinavian, or some other foreign language is spoken. The Irish have introduced many words from the Celtic tongue. In large cities, such as Chicago, there is a confusion of German, French, Polish, Chinese, Japanese, Irish, Greek, Scandinavian, and various other dialects. In spite of all that can be done—and little is done, by the way—we find the words and customs of these people stamping themselves upon our existence. I have not made a pretension of going over the entire field, or to speak of Quakers, Down East Yankees, and the peculiar expressions and words common to every State as distinguished from those of every other State. One has only to cross a river at Cairo, Ill., for instance, to imagine that Kentucky or Missouri is some planet far removed from Illinois, on which he has accidentally been transplanted.

The English tongue has no basis of its own. It has been a collection of thefts from its incipiency. Its roots extend into many dead languages, and its branches into all modern. Being a thief on a colossal scale, it follows necessarily that it is made richer by every acquisition from the sources mentioned. It may have become demoralized and degenerated in some instances, but I take the hopeful and optimistic view, that the grand tendency of the amalgamation of languages in America is upward and onward into a broader sphere, with a completer and a more surpassing vocabulary than the world has ever seen.

The question of a universal language as the outgrowth of amalgamation in America seems beyond forecast at present. We must admit that the vast assemblage of nations on this continent would have a tendency to make English the universal tongue, although not in its present form. This would be particularly true if the English-speaking people should become the majority, or, by force of numbers, conquer other nations. There can be no doubt that foreign people who learn English in the United States materially influence their respective fatherlands. At present

this is a very important element in the universal language question. But we must be frank to admit that the German tongue is still the superior one, and through it thoughts can find expression for which the English has no equivalent. We still lack a grammar, and what we call our "grammar" is a heterogeneous conglomeration, the laughing stock of foreign scholars and the despair of our own. We also lack words which no one has been able to coin, nor does it seem possible to create their perfectly satisfactory German equivalent into English. On the other hand, the English vocabulary is surpassing in the number of its words.

In arguing in favor of the English as the universal tongue we can say that the territory covered by our people is vast, that owing to a vaster number of occupations, inventions, and progresses, there are a vaster number of thoughts and ideas to be expressed, requiring an overwhelming vocabulary. This condition must have a tendency to engulf all foreign languages into one English tongue. But what will be the English tongue of the future? All foreign languages in future, more than in the past, will continue to stamp upon the English speaking races their impress, which will cling to it. It will not do to forecast too much. We stand upon the borders of the infinite sea of the future, blank to us, unknown as to the riches it has in store for the human race.

In this connection we must take into consideration the publication of papers and periodicals in foreign languages in the United States. The question has already arisen as to whether these ought not to be suppressed, as retarding the acceptance of the English tongue by those who have already cast their lot with America. The abolition of such publications would create much injury, as they have proved of the greatest possible advantage to America. When immigrants arrive in the United States they cannot speak its language and know nothing about its ways and methods of industrious living. These papers publish American news in the foreign tongue and give exactly the information these immigrants most need and could not otherwise obtain with facility. The new arrivals are thus enabled to settle down to work at once. As fast as they learn the language they begin taking American papers as well. Their children, who are invariably ashamed of their foreign origin, strive to pose as Americans, change the spelling of their names to make them appear American, and read only American publications. There is still another

field of usefulness for the papers published in foreign tongues. Thousands, yes millions of them, are scattered broadcast in the old countries, giving full information about America, which could not otherwise be disseminated among all classes abroad. This method of reaching old countries invites immigration of desirable brawn and brain. It must be confessed also that the study of German in American public schools has proved of great benefit in broadening the mind and as a mental discipline.

The amalgamation of color in the United States is a very remarkable spectacle. Negroes are becoming so white skinned, in many instances, as to lose apparently their African origin, and are often regarded by those unpossessed of the facts as whites. This, of course, is generally due not to intermarriage, but to interbreeding without the formality of a ceremony. The illegitimate descendants of the old slaveholders are exceedingly numerous, and the progeny of these are unmistakably white. These illegitimate progeny have in most instances inherited brains, and are smart, well educated people, highly industrious and good citizens. In brief, it may be said that the tendency of color of southern races in the United States has been toward the white, and of the white races toward the red, or copper-color, of the aborigines. In the latter case climate has been the prime factor, and its influences are quite visible in many sections. If we were to cast the horoscope of a thousand years hence we might say that the whites of that period will be the reds of to-day, and the blacks and southern races of to-day the whites of to-morrow.

Of the amalgamation of customs much might be said. The German has made the average American a beer drinker; foreign cooking is found on all the better tables in the United States; English clothing, manners and styles are borrowed by American gentlemen, and Paris makes the dresses and fashions for the ladies. The American army, outside of the graduates of West Point, is made up of the light-haired Europeans. Foreign music is cultivated by all classes in America. All of the lower political offices are in general held by foreign-born citizens. In the large metropolitan cities ladies purchase and use more cigarettes than men, a custom imported from southern lands. But while the American is taking these customs upon himself, he is also influential abroad. His inventions go into all foreign countries, and he follows to explain their use. The English and

American men-of-war have pushed into isolated places and forced in the missionary and white-race customs and trade.

In borrowing, the English speaking people capture many from whom they borrow, and in lending, force the lenders to become like themselves somewhat.

It is perhaps impossible to fathom the outcome of inter-marriage of races in America and the consequent intermixture of blood. The result ought to be the same as among the lower animals. If a cat and dog, for instance, are interbred, a result may be obtained ; but nature stops there and will permit no further descendants from the resulting object. But species of the same family invariably interbreed with the best of results, often producing a higher type of an animal. The human family all belong to the same genus. The intermixture of blood ought to have a health-giving influence on the descendant. If the descendant inherits the best traits physically and mentally of ancestry, certainly this would be true. I am inclined to believe, in fact forced to admit from observation, that such has been the case in America, and that intermarriage has resulted in a higher type of brains and physique, although no specific race is prepared, through pride, to make such an admission.

We now find ourselves confronted with the greatest question of modern times, viz.: What is to be the American of the future ? History would show that nations which lived unto themselves have died out. To say that we are living over their lives, literature and thoughts—that there is nothing new under the sun—is the greatest libel on the grandest age in the history of the world. The past is scarcely the basis of the present and future. The growth of man intellectually during the past ten years is greater and of more importance than that during his entire previous history.

If, then, other nations died out because they lived unto themselves, it is proof presumptive that an intermixture of races by intermarriage, and in customs and languages, must endure forever. This assemblage of nations on the American continent; this rapid development of a universal language by the amalgamation of all tongues, past and present ; this formation of a single race of man out of all races, can only be regarded as a colossal scheme of nature to infiltrate new life into humanity, and produce an enduring and higher type of man and language.

WILLIAM HOSEA BALLOU.